

REMARKS

Claims 1-5, 7-16 and 18-34 are pending in the current application. Claims 1, 11-12, 25, and 28-31 are independent claims. Claims 1, 11-12, 20, 25, and 28-31 are amended by this Amendment. Claims 6 and 17 are canceled by this Amendment. New claims 32-34 are added by this Amendment.

Allowable Subject Matter

Initially, Applicant notes with appreciation the Examiner's indication claims 6, 9-10, 17, and 20-23 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-5, 7-8, 11-16, 18-19, and 24-31 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yokoi et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,918,872) in view of Johnson et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,928,314). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 includes all of the features of claim 6 rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is patentable for at least the above reasons.

Applicant respectfully submits that claims 12, 25, 29, and 30 are amended to include the features of claim 6, which as noted above is indicated as containing allowable subject matter by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 12, 25, 29, and 30 are patentable for at least the above reasons.

Applicant respectfully submits that claims 11, 28, and 21 are amended to include the features of claims 2 and 21, which as noted above are indicated as containing allowable subject matter by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 11, 28, and 31 are patentable for at least the above reasons.

Further, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 2-5, 7-10, 13-16, 18-24, and 26-27, which depend from one of claims 1, 11-12, 25, and 28-31, are patentable for at least the same reasons discussed above in regards to claims 1, 11-12, 25, and 28-31 as well as on their own merits.

In view of the above, Applicant respectfully requests the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

New Claims

New claims 32-34 are claims 9, 10, and 21 respectively rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that new claims 32-34 are patentable for at least the above reasons.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, in view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the objections and rejections and allowance of each of the claims in connection with the present application is earnestly solicited.

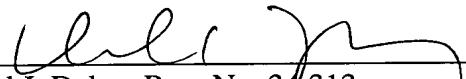
Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Donald J. Daley at the telephone number of the undersigned below.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 08-0750 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

HARNESS, DICKY, & PIERCE, P.L.C.

By


Donald J. Daley, Reg. No. 34,313

P.O. Box 8910
Reston, Virginia 20195
(703) 668-8000

DJD/AAM: tlt